

The Fire Fighter Gazette

Issue 22

May 2001

Retirement



Mr. James W. Hotell the Chief, Air Force Fire Protection has announced his retirement from federal service, effective 1 June 2001. Mr. Hotell will retire with 30 years of faithful and devoted

service to the United States Air Force. There will not be a formal ceremony at HQ AFCESA. Mr. Hotell will be honored during the Air Force activities at this year's DoD Fire and Emergency Services Conference, on 28 Aug 01, at New Orleans, LA. Anyone desiring to make a formal presentation should contact CMSgt Jim Podolske (DSN 523-6321, or james.podolske@tyndall.af.mil).

Structural Response Guidance Published

The publication of Department of Defense Instruction 6055.6, *Department of Defense Fire and Emergency Services Program*, in October 2000, has surfaced several questions concerning structural fire fighting responses to incidents involving base facilities. The most prominent issue is a complete understanding and definition of travel time, the methodology by which travel time is measured, and the use of risk assessment plans for outlying or remote facilities. A working group was formed to develop a **Structural Response Guidance** package. This guidance discusses the background, the concept of travel time, the integration of staffing and vehicle requirements, and lays out the risk assessment process. Furthermore, this guidance will enable senior fire officials to effectively communicate fire protection capabilities, and risks, to their respective major air command (MAJCOM) civil engineer and their wing leadership. MAJCOM have received a copy of the structural response guidance package!

Inside this Issue ...

Educational Opportunities	2
DoD Fire School	3
Military News/Civilian News	4/5
Fire Panel Meeting Minutes	6
Hotel Fire Safety	10

Educational Opportunities

The Air Force Academy Fire Department will be hosting a University of Cincinnati class: *Building Construction for the Fire Service*, taught by Mr. Patrick Reynolds, chairman of the Fire Science program at the University of Cincinnati. The class will begin on 25 June, and finish in the afternoon of 29 June. The class is required for their fire science degree program. Class size will be limited to 18, so please sign up early through the University.



For more information about this program, contact:

Open Learning—Fire Service Program
College of Applied Science
2220 Victory Parkway
Cincinnati OH 45206-2839
(513) 556-6583
www.uc.edu/cas/

Or, contact the Air Force Academy Fire Department, DSN 333-2051, or internet: ernst.piercy@usafa.af.mil

Incident Management Symposium



the Arizona Biltmore in Phoenix, Arizona.

The symposium this year will focus on command system safety at the incident. Participants will not only learn and improve incident management skills, but will be shown how to incorporate safety into a management action plan. Each attendee will attend a general session, then break into one of six workshop tracks, including:

- ◆ IMS Graduate Program (for previous attendees)

- ◆ IMS for Structural Fire Fighting
- ◆ IMS for Emergency Medical Services and Special Operations
- ◆ IMS for Emergency Operations Center
- ◆ IMS for Police/Fire Unified Command
- ◆ IMS for Military Personnel

For more information regarding the PFD IMS Symposium, call 1-800-743-6228, or e-mail: pfdsymp@ci.phoenix.az.us

Plain English?

Ever been told to use "plain English" on the radio? Try to figure out what these common expressions are:

"Eschew the implement of correction & vitiate the scion."

"All articles that coruscate with resplendence are not auriferous."

A visitor stopped by a fire house on a military installation recently and was inspired to leave this poem:

Big fire truck with great big wheels and giant hose
As it gets closer my excitement grows.
They jump out turn the water on and begin to spray
I could watch this all day
The fire's gone but I'm still in a daze
My firefighter friends come out though the haze.
They breathe fire and eat smoke
I'm glad it's them 'cause I'd choke.
They stop to see if I am alright
I tell them yes and I try to smile bright
They say don't worry every thing is fine
Just please don't jump up on the truck next time!
My fire fighter friends are actually down to earth ya'll
They even like to watch basketball
If they know I've been feeling bad for a while
They do something nice to make me smile
So you see I never knew
That there was so much that a fire fighter could do!
Thanks to those fire fighters that do their job
And thanks for not being a snob
Thanks for the pizza and coke
And thanks for laughing when I tell a joke
I hate to go but I gotta leave
Thanks for the smoke you eat and the fire you breathe!

Fire School Update

1. EFFECTIVE 14 MAY 01, THE X3AZR3E771-020 FIRE INSPECTOR I AND THE X3AZR3E771-021 FIRE INSPECTOR II COURSES WILL BE CANCELED. PER HQ AFCEA TASKING LETTER DATED 20 MAR 2001, COURSE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIRE INSPECTOR III, MOBILE TRAINING TEAM FOR FIRE INSPECTOR I AND FIRE INSPECTOR II WILL BE UNDER DEVELOPMENT. THE FOLLOWING COURSE SCHEDULE FY 01 CLASSES ARE CANCELLED:

X3AZR3E771-020 FIRE INSPECTOR I (13 DAYS) CLASS DATES:

30 MAY 2001-15 JUN 2001

11 JUL 2001-27 JUL 2001

15 AUG 2001-31 AUG 2001

X3AZR3E771-021 FIRE INSPECTOR II (11 DAYS) CLASS DATES:

14 MAY 2001-29 MAY 2001

18 JUN 2001-02 JUL 2001

30 JUL 2001-13 AUG-2001

2. EFFECTIVE 4 SEP 2001, STARTING WITH X3AZR3E771-021 FIRE INSPECTOR II, CLASS DATE 04 SEP 2001-18 SEP 2001 WILL RESUME IN RESIDENT. CURRENTLY THE FY02 TRAINING SCHEDULE FOR AIR FORCE SUPPLEMENTAL COURSES HAS NOT BEEN POSTED.

3. STARTING THE FY02 TRAINING SCHEDULE FOR THE FIRE INSPECTOR I & II (IN-RESIDENT) STUDENTS, CLASS SIZE WILL BE INCREASED FROM 15 TO 20 STUDENTS PER CLASS OFFERING.

4. THE X4AZT3E771-000 FIRE INSPECTOR I (MTT)(10 DAYS) AND X4AZT3E771-001 FIRE INSPECTOR II (MTT) WILL BE ON-LINE EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 2001. THE X3AZR3E771-023 FIRE INSPECTOR III CLASSES WILL START JANUARY 2002.

5. PLEASE DISSEMINATE THIS INFORMATION TO ALL LEVELS. POC: WENDY JOHNSON, GS-12, FIRE PROTECTION TRAINING MANAGER, DSN 477-4840.

Chief Jerry Ball (Lackland AFB, TX) and his fire dawgs put together this beautiful machine, used in their fire prevention program!



Military News

New allowance gives some airmen more money for food

Beginning May 1, some military families may have a new way of putting food on their tables. Under the National Defense Authorization Act for 2001, qualifying service members can receive up to \$500 a month with the new family subsistence supplemental allowance (FSSA). The program was designed to help families currently on food stamps; although this allowance does target those families, all total force members may apply. A recent survey identified about 1,000 Air Force households service wide that may qualify for the entitlement. Most of the anticipated participants are expected to come from overseas installations where food stamps are not available. Families on food stamps who qualify for FSSA will receive a monthly cash allowance equal to their food stamp amount. Those not on food stamps receive the amount of money required to bring their income to 130% of the federal poverty line, not to exceed \$500. Qualification is based on gross monthly income eligibility limits based on household size, however, unlike qualifying for food stamps, the FSSA includes housing allowances in the equation. Also included in determining income eligibility are basic allowance for subsistence or cash equivalents for those living in government housing, and all bonuses, special and incentive pays. The overseas cost-of-living allowance, stateside COLA, family separation housing allowance, clothing allowances, and all travel- and transportation-related allowances will not be included in gross income. To apply for this nontaxable allowance, people must fill out an application and supply information on household size and income to their commander. If approved, people must re-certify annually, when promoted, when income increases, when household size changes and when making a PCS move. Once a commander approves someone for FSSA, the paperwork is forwarded to the finance office and shows up in the member's pay. Because commanders are the approval authorities, some may require people to attend financial management classes. Although people are permitted to collect FSSA and food stamps at the same time, some who are approved for FSSA will no longer be eligible or may receive reduced amounts for food stamps. The FSSA may also affect household participation in the subsidized school lunch program, the Women, Infant and Children program, income-based day care programs and earned income tax credit. More information for FSSA is on the AF Crossroads web site: www.dmdc.osd.mil/fssa

Bullet Background Paper on proposed change to firefighter work schedules in SWA

PURPOSE: To provide MAJCOM Civil Engineers information concerning the Idea proposed to change firefighter work schedules in Southwest Asia (SWA) area of responsibility (AOR)

BACKGROUND

- ◆ CMSgt Glover, HQ AFCESA/CEXF, submitted Idea Number 2001-1790, *Change Firefighter Work Schedules While Deployed to Steady State Contingencies*
- ◆ This initiative proposes to change the work schedule for the firefighters assigned to Fire Operations in SWA from the 24 hours on 24 hours off schedule to 48 on and 24 off

Examples of expected benefits of the proposed work schedule for the Air Force are ...

- ◆ Significantly reduces Ops Tempo; eliminates 35 SWA requirements every 90 days
- ◆ Reduces civilian overtime pay at many installations caused by military deployment
- ◆ Reduces TDY expenses, based on deleting 35 positions
- ◆ Improves firefighter morale at home stations: reducing lost scheduled days off
- ◆ Reduces deployment frequency for individual firefighters
- ◆ Maximizes use of firefighters' time while deployed to contingency locations

DISCUSSION

(31 Jan 01) HQ AFCESA/CEXF recommended HQ ACC/CEX consider implementation of this proposal for the next Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) cycle stating "this alternative schedule could significantly benefit the fire protection career field and the Air Force"

(22 Feb 01) HQ ACC/CEX reviewed and approved the Idea with the note "we believe the MAJCOM CEs and ILE must embrace this and a policy change be approved by ILE before implementation"

(Mar 01) HQ USAF/ILEX, HQ AFCESA/CEX, and HQ ACC/CEX agreed to staff package through HQ USAF/ILE to have HQ ACC/CE coordinate this change with CENTAF and the SWA Wing Commanders before final approval and/or implementation

RECOMMENDATION

HQ ACC/CE coordinate the proposed change with CENTAF and SWA Wing Commanders. Upon coordination, provide guidance to MAJCOM Civil Engineers on future firefighter deployment requirements

Editor's note: AF/ILE approved this schedule on 27 Apr 01, and sent it to CENTAF and the SWA commanders for final approval and/or implementation

Total Tuition paid!

A new program, called Top-Up, is available to all active duty airman eligible for both Montgomery GI Bill benefits and tuition assistance. The program allows them to combine the 75% tuition assistance with their Montgomery GI Bill, giving them 100% tuition assistance. For details go to: www.af.mil/news, or call your education office.

Civilian News

GOVERNMENT MAY PICK UP LARGER PORTION OF FEHBP PREMIUMS

Under a bill introduced by Representative Steny Hoyer (D-Maryland), the federal government would pay a larger portion of federal employees' health insurance premiums. Currently, the federal government pays an average of between 72 and 75 percent of the premium cost, with employees paying the remainder. If H.R. 1307 becomes law, however, the government-paid portion would increase, so that the federal government would pay 80 percent of the health insurance premium cost. Two factors driving the legislation are the significant annual increases in the cost of Federal Employee Health Benefit Program (FEHBP) premiums, and the need to make federal employees' pay and benefits packages competitive for recruitment purposes. FEHBP health insurance premiums have risen more than 9 percent each year since 1999.

DOD CONTRACTORS OUTNUMBER CIVILIAN WORKERS

The Department of Defense reported to Congress last month that it previously underestimated the size of its contractor workforce. In fact, DoD says, in 1999 it had the equivalent of 734,000 contract workers performing services. Last August, DoD advised Congress that it estimated approximately 476,000 contractor personnel provided it with services in 1999. The larger, more accurate figure is the result of improvements in data collection and methodology. With 640,000 DoD civilian employees, the department now has more service contract workers than it does employees.

Thrift Savings Plan Changes

Just a few reminders about some changes you'll be seeing to the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). Beginning May 1st, two new TSP investment options became available - the Small Capitalization Stock Index Investment (S) Fund, and the International Stock Index Investment (I) Fund. During April, you should have received a revised Plan Summary from your agency (if you are in the Federal service) or from the TSP Service Office (if you are separated). The Plan Summary provides information about these funds and how you can invest in them. Also, remember that during the next open season (May 15 - July 31) the TSP contribution limit for FERS employees will in-

crease from 10 percent to 11 percent, and the contribution limit for CSRS employees will increase from 5 percent to 6 percent. Also, new FERS and CSRS employees will be eligible to contribute to the TSP immediately, regardless of their date of hire.

Benefits and Entitlements Information:

• **I cannot reach a counselor.** If you have Benefits and Entitlements questions, you can reach a counselor by calling 1-800-997-2378 or 527-2378 within the San Antonio area. Once you reach the main menu of the BEST telephone automated system, where you will hear "press 1 for health benefits, 2 for retirement, 3 for Thrift Savings Plan, and 4 for life insurance," you will press the number relating to your question or call, and then enter "0" to be transferred to a counselor. Counselors are available Monday - Friday, from 7 A.M. - 7 P.M. Central Standard Time.

• **I am having problems logging into the AFPC Secure Login Page.** If you have not clicked on the "Civilian" button located at the bottom of the page, you need to do that first to establish your User-Id and password. If that is not the problem, try deleting "saved" passwords from your browser and deleting temporary internet files by going to tools, then Internet options, clicking on the delete files button, and clicking on okay.

• **I can't remember my Web password or User-Id.** If it has been longer than 120 days since you've accessed the system, your password has been deleted. You can re-establish a new password by clicking on the "Civilian" button located at the bottom of the Login Page. If you have accessed the system within 120 days but can't remember your User-Id or password, you should contact the Technical Assistance Center via phone or E-mail. Contact information is located on the Login Page.

• **I don't know my Service Computation Date for Leave** You can obtain your SCD-Leave date by referencing "block 11" of your Leave and Earnings Statement. It is also located in "block 31" of your last SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action.

Fire Panel Notes ~ January 2001 Meeting

- **Major Griffin** discussed that HQ AFCESA/CEO chaired a meeting with MAJCOM representatives to develop a long-term strategy for educating and training civil engineer officers to include the Fire Marshal's Course. The group convened 35 Oct 00 at Wright-Patterson AFB OH. They concluded that the Fire Marshal Course was "desired, not required, prior to assumption of command. There is a window of opportunity prior to, or after, assuming command." Since this issue is a Readiness Board action item, HQ AFCESA/CEOT will need to brief the results to the Apr 01 Readiness Board.

- **CMSgt Glover** briefed that there was still a shortage of approximately 30 P-23's designated for joint-use. **Mr. Warner**, AFRC Fire Chief, recommended designating one of the P-23's in a set 4 or 5. Representatives also suggested not allocating specific trucks. Mr. Hotell decided that HQ AFCESA would develop a solid strategy or plan and provide feedback to the MAJCOM for their review and comment.

- The joint firefighter integrated response ensemble (JFIRE) concept of operations (CONOPs) working group is tentatively scheduled to convene in Apr 01 to develop guidance.

- **Lt Col Smith**, 312 TRS/CC, recommended HQ USAF/ILEXR interface with HQ ACC/DR concerning purchasing vehicles during the beddown and funding stream for new weapons platforms.

- **SMSgt Seigal**, 95th CEG/CEF - Edwards AFB, provided a general background briefing and solicited MAJCOM support for funding and/or hosting an Air Force Firefighter Combat Challenge event. Adopting the Firefighter Combat Challenge event should be investigated as a viable enhancement to promoting physical fitness and a healthier lifestyle throughout the fire protection career field. Equipment costs, registration fees, and TDY costs (travel and per diem) would have to be considered. The potential benefits are increased physical fitness, enhanced teamwork, and a potential for increased retention rates. **CMSgt Glover** showed the Combat Challenge video of the Air Force teams participating at the Las Vegas World Championship event. In discussing whether the Air Force should adopt the Firefighter Combat Challenge program, **SMSgt Seigal** raised two additional questions: (1) who will represent the Air Force during the World Championships, and (2) how much funding should be provided to Air Force teams? The Fire Panel members agreed with supporting the Combat Challenge; however, not as an Air Force identity. They concluded that each MAJCOM and installation would financially support competitors under their guidelines. HQ AFCESA would recognize fire competitors at the annual DoD Fire & Emergency Services Training Conference. Top performers would also be identified. Additionally,

HQ AFCESA would continue to put out information on events/competitions. The Fire Panel requested the Combat Challenge video be shown at the Civil Engineer Readiness Board (**CEFPP 01-04, OPR: HQ AFCESA/CEXF, ECD: Apr 01**).

- **CMSgt Rausch**, HQ PACAF Fire Chief, provided the Fire Panel with a briefing on PACAF proposed AEF Cycle 3 firefighter sourcing. The purpose of this presentation was to provide information to the Fire Panel to maximize the "Teaming Concept" and to propose providing bases with a concept of operations for "drawing-down" when deploying. Previously, the fragmentation of taskings across several bases resulted in individual or single person focus instead of a team focus. **CMSgt Rausch** briefed that HQ USAF/IL's theme was "Making Teaming Work." Teaming is defined as deploying airmen in unit type code (UTC) teams from one installation to one forward operation location. There must be a significant wing "team contribution" with the expectation and preplanning for reduced services at home station. The intent in cycle 3 is to tap a base hard once, but no more than twice. **Major Griffin** added the point that Air Staff is pursuing the goal of 18 firefighters per base. **CMSgt Rausch** listed proposed things that were "all right" to draw-down under the teamwork concept. These included:

- Deploy all AEF plus-ups
- Reduce ARFF staffing on two vehicles to two firefighters
- Collapse extra duty personnel to operations
- Reduce/Curtail formal training
- Reduce ARFF staffing on all other vehicles to two firefighters
- Reduce/Curtail leaves -- except those mandated
- Curtail fire prevention services
- Move all fire prevention personnel to operations
- Move training officer to operations
- Move FACC duties to operations
- Cross-man to the maximum extend possible
- Cross-man first run pumper
- Move rescue crew to unmanned stations
- Reduce staffing on rescue trucks
- Unman ARFF fire trucks
- Unman fire stations

CMSgt Rausch read a portion of the HQ USAF/XO message, dated 121440Z Jan 01: "Misunderstanding of the 'Do not break the base' concept, well-intentioned commanders, war planners and FAMS have withheld personnel or supported UTC fraggings to ensure base support was undisturbed. The result spreads requirements across several bases and several AEF rotations. Units are forced to support a few

(Continued on page 7)

Fire Panel Meeting...

(Continued from page 6)

personnel across several AEF rotations and more importantly, teams that train together do not deploy together. This misses the mark. The Chief understands that deploying trained teams may impact home-station operations. The original program action directive (PAD) is being modified to clarify his intent. We expect that some commanders will experience base support issues when supporting an AEF rotation. However, in the future our goal is to tap a unit hard only once and no more than twice per AEF cycle."

AETC: Mr. Byrd briefed the Fire Panel concerning HQ AETC's implementation plan to exchange military firefighter positions through one-for-one replacement with civilian firefighters. The initiative identified 318 military firefighter positions for replacement. HQ AETC/CE has currently received 116 civilian positions to exchange. This was a Command directed implementation. AETC is implementing an approved flow chart outlining Command priority sequence. Plan includes transferring (1) 1 Position at Goodfellow AFB - Jan 01, (2) 23 Positions at Goodfellow AFB - Oct 01, (3) 61 Positions at Maxwell AFB - Oct 01, and (4) 31 Positions at Sheppard AFB - Oct 01. There is a separate effort being pursued to exchange 20 military positions at Lackland AFB for 20 civilian positions at Brooks AFB. Fire Panel members appreciated the update and agreed that conversion actions, such as these, should continue involving HQ AFCESA to ensure wartime manning and requirements are not affected.

AFSPC: Mr. LaConte, HQ AFSPC Fire Chief, discussed the potential for fire protection to be included in the refractive surgery program. A recent AF news article described two new laser eye surgery programs beginning in 2001. Certain Air Force members will be able to have corrective eye surgery performed at Wilford Hall Medical Center. The first is the program for aviators and special duty personnel; while the second is the WarFighter Program. The second program will be offered at different sites to provide photo refractive keratotomy, or PRK, to active duty service members whose military occupations make them eligible. The article stated, "since we are all war fighters, all members are eligible, but on a priority basis decided by line commanders." **Mr. LaConte** requested the Fire Panel determine how to get the firefighter AFS on the priority list to have this surgery (**CEFP 01-06, OPR: HQ USAF/ILEXR, ECD: Aug 01**). Additionally, **Mr. LaConte** discussed contracting fire operations and requiring DoD certifications. Is it realistic to mandate DoD certifications or simply require compliance with NFPA Standards? If we were to do this, would the Air Force be missing or ignoring requirements? **Mr. Hotell** said his staff would review and provide comment on this issue. They would research what we are cur-

rently doing with contractors and compare NFPA and DoD requirements (**CEFP 01-07, OPR: HQ AFCESA/CEXF, ECD: Aug 01**).

AFRC: Mr. Warner, HQ AFRC Fire Chief, advocated the awarding of 5skill level without further training following graduation from the basic fire school and establishing the minimum field-level skill level as 3E751. He explained that on the military side, the first fully qualified position is "driver operator," effectively making all firefighter positions 3level positions. The Reserves believe the first 5level position should be that of firefighter rather than driver operator. Additionally, they believe that all the duties listed for the 3 level are in actuality 5level positions. They recommend the graduates of the basic fire school should be awarded the 5-skill level after completion of the minimum wait time. The second level in the fire service is driver operator. Just as fire inspector certification is required for assignment as a fire inspector; the two driver-operator CDCs should be required before assignment as a driver-operator. **Mr. Warner** commented that this was not a proposal for the Fire Panel to vote, only for the MAJCOMs to consider and ponder for future discussions.

AMC: Mr. Grammer, HQ AMC Fire Chief, described that the Air Mobility Command bases were still having trouble obtaining INTERSPIRO parts. AFRC and the Fire Academy, along with other MAJCOMs, were having similar trouble. **Mr. Winjum**, HQ ANG Fire Chief, expressed concern on maintenance of this equipment. **Mr. Hotell** took this as an action item for the HQ AFCESA Fire Protection staff to evaluate and provide some potential options (**CEFP 01-08, OPR: HQ AFCESA/CEXF, ECD: Jul 01**). **Mr. Grammer** also expressed concerns of the requirements for military family housing (MFH) inspections. HQ AFCESA will ask DoD counterparts for their interpretation and comments (**CEFP 01-09, OPR: HQ AFCESA/CEXF, ECD: Jul 01**).

ANG: Mr. Winjum discussed that the Guard was trying to put money in the 2007 programming request to fix fire protection vehicles. He also expressed the importance for other MAJCOMs to get their requirements into him concerning deployment for training purposes.

AFSOC: CMSgt Pitrat, announced his retirement in Jul 01. The Fire Panel members congratulated him and expressed this would be a loss to the Air Force.

ACC: Mr. Caratachea, HQ ACC Fire Chief, requested MAJCOMs to consider moving to a certification level as compared to a skill level in the future. Additionally, Mr. Caratachea has requested some additional information be provided to the MAJCOMs: 1) What is the Air Force corporate decision on the impact of the AFFF issue, and what is our strategy to

(Continued on page 8)

Fire Panel...

(Continued from page 7)

address the long term problem, i.e., Operations and Engineering, 2) What is the current status of the Fire Training Area reoccurring work plan contract initiative, 3) What is the status of the finalizing and publishing the Air Force Manpower Standard 44EF? 4) Define the rules of engagement for the fire fighting vehicle modernization plan (FFVMP) for FY08 and beyond. Also, develop a long-range plan to provide fire vehicles for the DoD Fire Academy and the ANG 5) Provide priorities and focus on future fire protection modernization plans with MAJCOM involvement in the process, 6) Requested the development of an Air Force Fire Protection and Emergency Services Strategic Plan (Business Plan) with MAJCOM involvement, 7) Provide updated information concerning the Air Force direction (fire protection) and approach on the Full Spectrum Threat response issue.

DoD Fire Academy: Lt Col Smith, 312th TRS/CC, expressed that the Fire Academy had to pay approximately \$200K annually to replace parts for breathing apparatus. He proposed to start researching for a replacement breathing apparatus for training purposes. Additional training on the Interspiro breathing apparatus would be provided for all Air Force students. This would save money. The MAJCOMs concurred with this proposal. Lt Col Smith next described that a recent operational readiness inspection (ORI) had written-up the Fire Academy for "Failure to maintain historical fire vehicles." The Fire Academy has worked with legal and the IRS to establish a Historical Foundation. Lt Col Smith also briefed that he had worked with Col Ritenour and IMA personnel to develop a master plan for the dormitories and the Fire Academy. In order to instill more heritage and professionalism in the students, he requested each MAJCOM consider sponsoring a room. The MAJCOMs would provide pictures of command firefighters, equipment, and memorabilia.

USAFE: CMSgt Ford, HQ USAFE Fire Chief, briefed the Fire Panel members on the "foreign compare technology" program. He described this program as a means, through research and development, to explore foreign technology. CMSgt Ford requested \$2M to obtain fire vehicles through this program. If funds are obtained, USAFE may be able to allow other MAJCOMs to use the programmed funds under the Fire-fighter Vehicle Modernization Plan for FY02-07.

AFMC: Mr. Davis, HQ AFMC Fire Chief, requested additional data and guidance on speed limits for emergency responses. The normal response speed standard in AFMC is speed plus 10 miles per hour with lights and sirens. However, should it be an Air Force Standard? HQ AFCEA/CEXF will take this issue back to research and provide guidance to MAJCOMs.

Fire News



Tent Fire Test — 1:05 minutes into the test!



Ali Al Salem AB...11 June, 1998 - 14 tents burn in minutes

Cause: Overloaded power strip

Effect: Nine living quarters lost to fire

Can you identify this General? Send your response to:

ernst.piercy@
usafa.af.mil

Bonus Question: Where was this famous picture taken (be specific!)



HOTELS COULD BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH...

by Captain **RH Kauffman**, Los Angeles County Fire Department

Editor's Note: I realize this is a very lengthy article, but I felt it was written very well, and included some great information!

Have you ever been in a hotel during a fire? It's a frightening experience, and you should start thinking about it. For instance, how would you have acted if you had been in one of these fires?

The Thomas Hotel, San Francisco, CA 20 DEAD

The La Salle Hotel, Chicago, IL 61 DEAD

The MGM Grand Hotel, Las Vegas, NV 54 DEAD

The Winecoff Hotel, Atlanta, GA 119 DEAD

Of course, there have been hundreds more with thousands of deaths, but I think you're getting the drift. The majority of those people did not have to die. Contrary to what you have seen on television or in the movies, fire is not likely to chase you down and burn you to death. It's the bi-products of fire that will kill you. Super heated fire gases (smoke) and panic will almost always be the cause of death long before the fire arrives if it ever does. This is very important. You must know how to avoid smoke and panic to survive a hotel fire. With this in mind, here are a few tips:

SMOKE. Where there is smoke, there is not necessarily fire. A smoldering mattress, for instance, will produce great amounts of smoke. Air conditioning and air exchange systems will sometimes pick up smoke from one room and carry it out to other rooms or floors. You should keep that in mind because smoking and matches cause 70% of the hotel fires. In any case, your prime objective should be to leave at the first sign of smoke. Smoke, being warmer, will start accumulating at the ceiling and work its way down. The first thing you will notice is THERE ARE NO "EXIT" SIGNS. I'll talk more about the exits later, just keep in mind when you have smoke, it's too late to start looking for "exit" signs. Another thing about smoke you should be aware of is how irritating it is on the eyes. The problem is your eyes will only take so much irritation then they close. Try all you want, you won't be able to open them if there is still smoke in the area. It's one of your body's compensatory mechanisms. Lastly, the fresh air you want to breathe is at or near the floor. Get on your hands and knees (or stomach) and STAY THERE as you make your way out. Those who don't probably won't get far.

PANIC. (pan ik). A sudden, overpowering terror often afflicting many people at once. Panic is the product of your imagination running wild and it will set in as soon as it dawns on you you're lost, disorientated, or you don't know what to do. Panic is almost irreversible: once it sets in, it seems to grow. Panic will make you do things that could kill you. People in a state of panic are rarely able to save themselves. If you understand what's going on, what to do, where to go, and how to get there, panic will not set in. The man in the example I used would not have died if he had known what to do. For instance, had he known the exit was to the left and 4 doors down on the left, he could have gotten on

his hands and knees where there was fresh air and started counting doorways. Even if he couldn't keep his eyes open, he could feel his way as he crawled, counting the doors. 1... 2... 3... BINGO! He would NOT have panicked. He would be alive today, telling of his "great hotel fire" experience.

EXITS. The elevator drops you at the 12th floor and you start looking for your room "Let's see ... room 1236 ... here it is". You open the door and drop your luggage. AT THAT VERY MOMENT, turn around and go back into the hallway to check your exit. You may NEVER get another chance. Don't go into the bathroom, open the curtains, turn on the TV, smarten your appearance, or crash out on the bed. I know you're tired and you want to relax, but it's absolutely essential ... no ... CRITICAL that you develop the HABIT of checking for your exit after you drop your luggage. It won't take 30 seconds, and believe me, you may NEVER get another chance. If there are 2 of you sharing a room, BOTH of you locate your exit. Talk it over as you walk towards it. Is it on the left or right... do you have to turn a corner? Open the exit door... what do you see... stairs or another door? (Sometimes there are 2 doors to go through, especially in newer hotels.) I'd hate to see you crawl into a broom closet thinking it was the exit! Are you passing any rooms where your friends are staying? If there was a fire, you may want to bang on their doors as you go by. Is there anything in the hallway that would be in your way ... an ice-machine maybe? As you arrive back at your room, take a look once more. Get a good mental picture of what everything looks like. Do you think you could get to the exit with a "blindfold" on? This procedure takes less than one minute and to be effective, it must become a habit. Those of you who are too lazy or tired to do it consistently are real "riverboat gamblers". There are over 5,000 hotel fires per year. The odds are sure to catch up with you.

USING THE EXIT. Should you have to leave your room during the night, it is important to close the door behind you. This is very effective in keeping out fire and will minimize smoke damage to your belongings. Some doors take hours to burn through. They are excellent "fire stops" so close every door you go through. If you find smoke in the exit stairwell, you can bet people are leaving the doors open as they enter. Always take your key with you. Get into the habit of putting the key in the same place every time you stay in a hotel. Since every hotel has night stands, that's an excellent location. It's close to the bed so you can grab it when you leave without wasting time looking for it. It's im-

(Continued on page 10)

Hotel Fire Safety...

(Continued from page 9)

important you close your door as you leave, and it's equally as important that you don't lock yourself out. You may find conditions in the hallway untenable, and want to return to your room. If you're now in the habit of checking your exit and leaving the room key on the night stand, you're pretty well prepared to leave the hotel in case of a fire, so let's "walk" through it once. Something will awake you during the night. It could be the telephone, someone banging on the door, the smell of smoke, or some other disturbance. But, whatever it is, investigate it before you go back to sleep. A popular "Inn" near LAX recently had a fire and one of the guests later said he was awakened by people screaming but went back to bed thinking it was a party. He nearly died in bed. Let's suppose you wake up to smoke in your room. Grab your key off the nightstand, roll off the bed and head for the door on your hands and knees. Even if you could tolerate the smoke by standing, DON'T. You'll want to save your eyes and lungs for as long as possible. BEFORE you open the door, feel it with the palm of your hand. If the door or knob is quite hot, don't open it. The fire could be just outside. We'll talk about that later. With the palm of your hand still on the door (in case you need to slam it shut), slowly open the door and peek into the hallway to "assess conditions". As you make your way to the exit, stay against the wall on the side where the exits is. It



MGM Grand Fire, 1980

is very easy to get lost or disorientated in a smoky atmosphere. If you're on the wrong side of the hallway, you might crawl right on by the exit. If you're in the middle of the hall, people who are running will trip over you. Stay on the same side as the exit, count doors as you go. When you reach the exit and begin to descend it is very important that you WALK down and hang onto the handrail as you go. Don't take this point lightly. The people who will be running will knock you down and you might not be able to get up. Just hang on and stay out of everyone's way. All you have to do now is leave the building, cross the street and watch the action. When the fire is out and the smoke clears, you will be allowed to re-enter the building. If you closed your room door when you left, your belongings should be in pretty good shape. Smoke will sometimes get into the exit stairway. If it's a tall building, this smoke may not rise very high before it cools and becomes heavy. This is called "stacking". If your room is on the 20th floor, for instance, you could enter the stairway and find it clear. As you descend you could encounter smoke that has "stacked". Do not try to "run through it" - peo-

ple die that way. Turn around and walk up. Now you must really hang onto the handrail. The people running down will probably be glassy-eyed and in a panic and will knock you right out of your socks! They will run over anything in their way, including a fire fighter. You'll feel as though you're going upstream against the Chicago Bears, but hang on and keep heading up towards the roof. If for some reason you try one of the doors to an upper floor and find it locked, that's normal, don't worry about it. Exit stairwells are designed so that you cannot enter from the street or roof. Once inside, however, you may exit at the street or roof but cannot go from floor to floor; this is done for security purposes. When you reach the roof, prop the door with something. This is the ONLY time you will leave a door open. Any smoke in the stairwell may now vent itself to the atmosphere and you won't be locked out. Now find the windward side of the building (the wet finger method is quite reliable), have a seat and wait until they find you. Roofs have proved to be a safe secondary exit and refuge area. Stay put. Firemen will always make a thorough search of the building looking for bodies. Live ones are nice to find.

YOUR ROOM. After you check your exit and drop the key on the nightstand, there is one more thing for you to do. Become familiar with your room. See if your bathroom has a vent; all do, but some have electric motors. Should you decide to remain in your room, turn it on to help remove the smoke. Take a good look at the window in your room. Does it open? Does it have a latch, a lock? Does it slide? Now open the window (if it works) and look outside. What do you see? A sign, ledges? How high up are you? Get a good mental picture of what's outside, it may come in handy. It's important you know how to OPEN your window, you may have to close it again. Should you wake up to smoke in your room and the door is too hot to open or the hallway is completely charged with smoke, *don't panic*. Many people have defended themselves quite nicely in their room and so can you. One of the first things you'll want to do is open the window to vent the smoke. I hope you learned how to open it when you checked in. It could be dark and smoking in the room. Those who don't will probably throw a chair through the window. If there is smoke outside and you have no window to close, it will enter your room and you will be trapped. The broken glass from the window will cut like a surgeon's scalpel. At the Ramada Inn fire, an airline captain on a layover threw a chair through the window and cut himself seriously. Don't compound your problems. Besides, if you break out your window with a chair, you could hit a fire fighter on the street below. If there is fresh air outside, leave the window open, but keep an eye on it. At this point, most people would stay at the window, waving frantically, while

(Continued on page 11)

More Hotel Fire Safety...

(Continued from page 10)

their room continues to fill with smoke, if the fire burns through. This procedure is not conducive to longevity. You must be aggressive and fight back. Here are some things you can do in any order you choose ... if the room phone works, let someone know you're in there. Flip on the bathroom vent. Fill the bath with water. (*Don't get into it - it's for fire fighting. You'd be surprised how many people try to save themselves by getting into a tub of water - that's how you cook lobsters and crabs, so you know what happens!*) Wet some sheets or towels, and stuff the cracks of your door to keep out the smoke. With your ice-bucket, bail the water from the bath onto the door to keep it cool. Feel the walls - if they are hot, bail water onto them too. You can put your mattress up against the door and block it in place with the dresser. Keep it wet - keep everything wet. Who cares about the mess. A wet towel tied around your nose and mouth is an effective filter if you fold it in a triangle and put the corner in your mouth. If you swing a wet towel around the room, it will help clear the smoke. If there is a fire outside the window, pull down the curtains and move everything combustible away from the window. Bail water all around the window. Use your imagination and you may come up with some tricks of your own. The point is, there shouldn't be any reason to panic - keep fighting until reinforcements arrive. It won't be long.

ELEVATORS. There isn't an elevator made that can be used as a "safe" exit. In all states, elevators by law, cannot be considered an "exit". They are complicated devices with a mind of their own. The problem is people only know one way out of a building - the way they came in, and if that was the elevator, they are in trouble. Elevator shafts and machinery extends through all floors of a building,

and besides, with the shaft filling with smoke, there are hundreds of other things that could go wrong and probably will. Everyone tries to get on the elevator in an emergency. Fights break out and people get seriously injured. Smoke, heat and fire do funny things to elevator call buttons, controls and other complicated parts. Fires have killed many people, including



Tragic photo of woman jumping at the Winecoff Hotel Fire.

firemen. Several New York firemen recently used an elevator when responding to a fire up on the 20th floor. They pushed 18, but the elevator went right on by the 18th floor.

The doors came open on the 20th floor to an inferno and remained open long enough to kill all the firemen. The doors then closed and the elevator returned to the lobby. Hand operated elevators are not exempt. Some elevator operators have been beaten by people fighting over the controls. If you have any idea that there might be smoke or fire in your hotel, avoid the elevator like the plague.

JUMPING. It's important I say something about jumping because so many people do it. Most are killed or injured in the process. I cannot tell you whether or not you should jump. Every fire, although similar, is different. I can tell you, however, what usually happens to "jumpers". If you're on the 1st floor, you could just OPEN the window and climb out. From the second floor you could probably make it with a sprained ankle, but you must jump out far enough to clear the building. Many people hit windowsills and ledges on the way down, and they go into cartwheels. If they don't land on their head and kill themselves, they're injured seriously. If you're any higher than the 3rd, the chances are you won't survive the fall. You would probably be better off fighting the fire. Nearby buildings seem closer than they really are and many have died trying to jump to a building that looked 5 feet away, but was actually 15 feet away. Panic is what causes most people to jump. There was a fire in Brazil a few years ago where 40 people jumped from windows and all 40 died. Ironically, 36 of those jumped after the fire was out. Many people have survived by staying put whilst those around them jumped to their death. If you can resist panic and think clearly, you can use your own best judgment.

CALLING THE FIRE DEPARTMENT. Believe it or not, most hotels will not call the fire department until they verify whether or not there really is a fire and try to put it out themselves. Should you call the reception to report a fire, they will always send the bellhop, security guard, or anyone else that's not busy to investigate. Hotels are very reluctant to "disturb" their guests and fire engines in the streets are quite embarrassing and tend to draw crowds. In the New Orleans hotel fire, records show that the fire department received only one call, from a guest in one of the rooms. The desk had been notified of fire 20 minutes earlier and had sent a security guard to investigate. His body was later found on the 12th floor about 10 feet from the elevator. Should you want to report a fire or smell of smoke, ask the hotel operator for an outside line for a local call. Call the fire department and tell them your room number in case you need to be rescued. You need not feel embarrassed, that's what we're here for. We would much rather come to a small fire or smoking electrical motel that you smelled than be called 20 minutes later after 6 people have died. Don't let hotel "policy" intimidate you into doing otherwise. The hotel may be a little upset with you, but really ... who gives a darn. The fire department will be glad you called: you may have saved many lives. Besides, it's a great way for us to meet people! Well, the rest is up to you. Only you can condition yourself to react in a hotel emergency. You can be well prepared by developing the habits we've talked about.